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Good Morning members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Cheryl Streberger, Benefits Representative for UAW Local 6000. I am a Registered Nurse for the Department of Community Health and a 32-year employee. I come before you this morning in support of HB 4248.

During the 2003 concession bargaining negotiations UAW came to an agreement with David Fink then OSE Director to explore why the Department of Corrections had so many vacancies and high amount of mandatory overtime for Nurses at the Correctional Facilities in Jackson. From that agreement came the Registered Nurse Committee, with representation from OSE, DOC and UAW. We meet monthly on and off for three (3) years to discuss Recruitment and Retention issues. During this time the DOC had a high vacancy rate due to medicals of the staff RN's and inability to hire RN's. Part of the problem in hiring was that private sector offered sign on bonuses and the hiring process was not as long. When DOC interviews for a position it takes anywhere from 3 weeks to 4 months for the department to actually hire the nurse. During that time the nurse has gone somewhere else. When you have a shortage of nurses and many employers vying for those nurses, they will not wait months to get hired. There is not a line of RN's knocking on the Department of Corrections door to get hired.

The State of Michigan with the collaboration of the Department of Corrections and UAW offered a sign on bonus and retention bonus for the facilities in Jackson. The committee came up with a method of stream lining the hiring process, by having one central location of hiring for facilities in the three regions. This process to date has not been implemented and today the process remains long. The department is losing RN's to other institutions.

The committee also came up with a Per Diem Nurse Pool. In this "in house nurse pool", RN's would be hired to work a total of 1040 hours in a 12-month period. They would fill in those shifts where the Civil Service Classified RN's did not want to volunteer to work overtime. This would reduce the amount of mandatory overtime the nurses were being forced to work. This was also provided as a plan for the Department of Corrections during Judge Enslin's ruling on the Hadix case. Where he indicated that patient care was deficient due to not enough RN's on staff, and the department must produce a plan of increasing the nursing staff.

The process of buy in was long as most government processes are and when finally approved by all the players, the 2007 legislative session put in the budget the "double dipping" language. This language had an adverse effect on hiring retired RN's who would be willing to return and work for the department. The returning retired RN's was a perfect fit for the department, there was no training involved they would hit the ground running. This would have relieved the mandatory overtime and provide increase patient care.

I am asking the Judiciary Committee to approve the exemptions for the Department of Corrections to hire retired RN's without affecting their retirement. The current RN's need this temporary relief from the mandatory overtime until the department can hire permanent full time nurses. It would aid in the retention of current employee's.

Thank you for your consideration on this HB 4248 and if you would like any more information please contact me.

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